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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/574,185	03/30/2006	Curtis Freeman	US030398US	7445

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PHILIPS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & STANDARDS  
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EXAMINER
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MEHMOOD, JENNIFER

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2612

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10/29/2007

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/574,185

Applicant(s)

FREEMAN, CURTIS

Examiner

Jennifer A. Mehmood

Art Unit

2612

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 March 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 March 2006 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/30/2006.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***Claim Objections***

1. Claim 11 is objected to because of the following informalities: Line 7, change "configure" to "configuring". Line 10, insert "to" between the words "according" and "the". Appropriate correction is required.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:  
  
The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
3. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.
4. Claim 16 recites the limitation "said control devices" in line 1. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 16, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Scott (US 6,320,505).

For claims 1 and 11, Scott discloses an apparatus and method for notification that equipment having at least one function is due for return to a home station, comprising: a reminder alarm for notification that the equipment is due for return to the home station (col 1, lns 4-8), said reminder alarm having a default timeout configuration (col 6, lns 4-9); a timeout device (Fig. 9, items 6; Fig. 6, item 26); a control device to optionally configures the reminder alarm timeout configuration at the home station (col 5, lns 40-55), and arm the timeout device with the configured timeout, and when the timeout expires, generate a reminder alarm to return the equipment to the home station, said alarm generated according to the timeout configuration (col 3, lns 17-27; col 6, lns 31-40 and 55-67; col 6, lns 1-28).

For claims 2 and 12, Scott discloses the control device is further configured to upon return of the equipment to the home station, resetting the reminder alarm timeout configuration to said default timeout configuration (col 5, lns 45-52 – movement from a first position to a second position).

For claims 4 and 14, Scott discloses the reminder alarm timeout configuration further comprises a default reminder alarm progression; the control device is further configured to: optionally configure the progression for said reminder alarm, and generating a sequence of progressive reminder alarms according to said configured progression (col 7, lns 3-17).

For claims 6 and 16, Scott discloses said control devices are further configured to generate the reminder alarm as at least one repetition of at least one of an audio

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tone, an audio message, a visual signal (col 6, lns 31-40; col 7, lns 9-15), and a video text message.

For claims 7 and 17, Scott discloses the control device is further configured to: provide a default reminder alarm progression; optionally configure the progression for said reminder alarm; and generate the at least one repetition as a sequence of progressive reminder alarms according to said configured progression (col 6, lns 31-40; col 7, lns 3-15).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 3 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott (US 6,320,505) and further in view of Scop et al. (US 5,283,546).

Scott does not disable a function of equipment when it is not essential. However, Scop discloses disable a function of equipment when it is not essential (Fig. 1A, item 109; col 2, lns 28-35). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made to disable a function of equipment when it is not essential in order to conserve power.

12. Claims 5 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott (US 6,320,505) and further in view of Shankarappa (US 5,877,676).

Scott does not disclose the set progression to be one of an incremental increase and random variation in at least one of the intensity of the reminder alarm and frequency of the reminder alarm. However, Shankarappa discloses set progression to be one of an incremental increase and random variation in at least one of the intensity of a reminder alarm and frequency of the reminder alarm (Fig. 1, item 26; col 4, lns 31-45). It would have been obvious to set the progression to be an increase in intensity or frequency of an alarm so that a person hearing the alarm can estimate an amount of time during which the alarm has been sounding based on the pitch of the alarm.

9. Claims 8, 9, 18, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott (US 6,320,505) and further in view of Maloney (US 2005/0156740).

For claims 8 and 18, Scott discloses resetting a reminder alarm, but does not disclose said home station is a touchpad input device that accepts a password input via the touchpad, and said control device is further configured to reset said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on input of a predetermined password via the touchpad. Maloney, on the other hand, discloses a touchpad input device that accepts a password input via the touchpad, and a control device is further configured to reset a reminder alarm to a default timeout configuration on input of a predetermined password via the touchpad (parags 006; 0017-0019; 0057; 0063). It would have been obvious to

reset an alarm based on input of a predetermined password in order to generate a record of a rented item by a specific individual.

For claims 9 and 19, Scott discloses said home station is a mechanical reset device that resets the reminder alarm when mechanically engaged with said reminder alarm (col 3, lns 16-26; col 5, lns 37-55). Scott, however, does not disclose a mechanical key and key controller that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on mechanical engagement with the mechanical key reset device. Maloney, however, discloses a mechanical key and key controller that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on mechanical engagement with the mechanical key reset device (parags 0037, 0038, 0044, 0048). It would have been obvious to disclose a mechanical key reset device with a mechanical key controller in order to keep track of rented/returned items.

10. Claims 10 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott (US 6,320,505) and further in view of Bormaster (US 2002/0158751).

Scott discloses a home station, but the home station does not include one of an infrared or RF transmitter. However, Bormaster discloses a home station is one of an infrared transmitter and a radio frequency transmitter, having a given range and that continually transmits a reminder alarm reset signal (parag 0008); and said reminder alarm further comprises a corresponding one of an infrared sensor and a radio frequency receiver that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on receipt of said transmitted reset signal, wherein said reminder alarm is continually reset whenever said equipment (parag 0016) is within the given range of the home

station (parag 0020). In view of the two teachings, it would have been obvious to implement the home station with an RF transmitter and receiver where an alarm is continually reset whenever said equipment is within the given range of the home station so that equipment is not flagged as being missing, but returned to a particular area.

### ***Conclusion***

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

Hunt (US 6,708,879) and Vinet (US 3,933,231) disclose automated rental systems.

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jennifer A Mehmood whose telephone number is (571) 272.2976. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 8:00am to 4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Daniel Wu, can be reached at (571) 272.2964. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should



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you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic

Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Jennifer A. Mehmood

October 25, 2007

  
**BENJAMIN C. LEE**  
**PRIMARY EXAMINER**